

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC062248
Inspection date	18/02/2014
Inspector	Nick Veysey
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	19/07/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home offers care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is one of several owned by a private company.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Good progress	The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the large majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Satisfactory progress	The children's home has maintained quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Inadequate progress	The children's home has failed to address one or more requirements and/or has not met the majority of recommendations and/or the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people have declined since the last full inspection.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **good progress**.

At the full inspection in July 2013 the overall effectiveness of this children's home was judged as good. The areas for improvement found at the inspection related to the arrangements for deputising for the Registered Manager; the development of staff skills and knowledge through training; improving the quality of written records including behaviour records, placement plans and risk assessments; and improving the accommodation.

The children's home is making good progress with continued improvements in the quality of care and outcomes for young people. Since the last inspection a new Registered Manager with suitable skills, experience and qualifications has been appointed. She has taken steps to address the vast majority of the areas for improvement. The development of staff's skills and knowledge through training is the only area that has not been fully addressed. Since the last inspection staff have had limited training opportunities to better equip them to meet the needs of young people, in particular in developing their expertise around child sexual exploitation, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender young people, mental health issues, self-harm, working with young people who may have been abused, and communicating

effectively with young people. The manager has completed a detailed training needs analysis for staff and identified the need for development in these important areas. She is currently working to provide the necessary training opportunities in the training programme for the next 12 months. There are now clear arrangements for the running of the children's home in the manager's absence. A senior member of staff with suitable experience and skills has been appointed to deputise for the manager. However, the senior staff has not had training relevant to their management responsibilities, including training in professionally supervising staff.

Young people live in a good children's home that is making a positive difference to their lives. Young people are making continued progress in all aspects of their welfare and development. Including education, emotional maturity, building and maintaining relationships, health, managing their feelings and more able to accept help and guidance, including counselling, from staff and support services. A social worker said 'my young person is supported in the placement and is happy, there have been great improvements for her.'

Some young people occasionally struggle to manage their feelings and are working hard with staff to find ways to deal with anxieties and frustrations more constructively. Some young people find listening to music really helpful or having some space and time to calm down. One young person said 'I still get angry but staff know how to help me by taking me away from situations. I can calm down and then then talk to staff about what has happened.' Staff work closely with psychotherapists, psychologists, and nurses to develop a better understanding of individual young people's needs and gain insights into how best to help them. Overall there has been a reduction in young people being involved in risky behaviour that may be harmful to their welfare.

Young people receive high quality support from caring and competent staff. Staff place young people firmly at the centre of what they do. They are fully committed to promoting young people's welfare, even in challenging situations. Young people have good relationships with staff. They are positive about staff and feel that staff are interested in their lives and want to help them to be safe and do well. A young person said 'even when I acted completely out of line and staff were upset, they were still there for me and never gave up.' Staff ensure young people receive personalised support tailored to meet their individual and diverse needs. They encourage young people to take responsibility for their health and make informed decisions to promote a healthy lifestyle, for example reducing smoking. Young people receive excellent guidance and advice around health issues, including sexual health and relationships.

Young people live in a safe, clean, homely and comfortable environment that is decorated and furnished to a good standard. They choose how their bedrooms and the lounges are decorated and play an active role in the running of the children's home. Young people feel that staff listened to their views and taken them seriously. They are involved in making complex decisions about their lives. One young person said 'staff and my social worker listened to me about where I want to live in the

future and go to college, and this is happening.'

Staff suitably balance the need for protection with enabling young people to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. However, some young people feel frustrated about some of the restrictions placed on their lives and do not always feel involved in what happens to them. One young person said 'I always go to my reviews and they ask my views, but I feel like all the decisions have been made beforehand, no matter what I want.' She feels that some staff do not explain the reasons for decisions to her properly. It may be in young people's best interests not to act upon all their wishes, but they need understand why.

Staff have a very clear understanding of young people's vulnerabilities and potential risks to their safety. They have a good understanding of safeguarding, including the risks from sexual exploitation, and follow effective safe caring practices. They take suitable steps to protect young people and promptly report any concerns about young people's welfare. Young people's individual care plans now clearly identify any risks they may face, outline effective strategies to ensure their welfare is promoted and protected. Staff ensure these plans are consistently put into practice and routinely reviewed to fully address young people's needs and the risks. The manager and staff have strong links with the police, local authority safeguarding team, and placing authorities. There is excellent working relationships and regular communication about safeguarding issues. A local authority safeguarding officer said 'the staff communicate and share information well and act on plans for the protection of young people.'

There has been a significant improvement in the quality of the written records. The manager has developed an effective system for monitoring the standard of recording and making necessary improvements, for example including more detailed evidence and reflection on young people's progress. The behaviour management records now include all the relevant information to provide a clear picture of each incident, including young people's views about what happened, to enable the manager and staff reflect, learn lessons about how best to support young people and develop practice. The placement and health plans clearly identify the full range of young people's needs, circumstances, and how their needs are being met. The manager has introduced an impact assessment for staff to reflect on young people's progress and experiences and to what extent their support has made a difference to young people and promoting better outcomes. The impact assessments are a useful tool for measuring outcomes and the effectiveness of the quality of care. Although there have been improvements in the written records, the manager is not complacent and sees this as an area for continued improvement, in particular developing staff skills in recording and analysis of young people's progress. Overall, the written records now provide a clearer picture of young people's experiences and contribute to an understanding of their lives.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure children understand how their views have been taken into account, and where their wishes are not acted upon, they are helped to understand why (NMS 1.2)
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the young people; in particular they have access to training on child sexual exploitation and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender young people, mental health issues, self-harm, working with young people who may have been abused, and communicating effectively with young people. Also senior staff with management responsibilities have training relevant to their role, including in professionally supervising staff. (NMS 18.1)

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the progress made by the provider since the last full inspection, identifies any further strengths, any areas for improvement and makes judgements as outlined in the *Inspection of children's homes – framework for inspection*.